PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

I really hope many of you were able to attend at least one film presentation during the RVA Environmental Film Festival. Richmond Audubon Society has been a sponsor of that wonderful, free educational program for the last few years, thanks in large part to the efforts of Lori and Bob Schamerhorn, who sit on the board for both RAS and the festival. This year, they selected a wonderful film for RAS to sponsor, called “Birders: The Central Park Effect.” If you weren’t able to join us at the Byrd Theater for the showing during the festival, I hope you get a chance to see this remarkable film at some point. It follows a handful of birders who live in New York City and take advantage of the birding opportunities Central Park has to offer, particularly during the spring and fall migration periods. One of my favorite parts of the film was a list of the你能content on page 2

SNOWY OWL ENCOUNTER by Julie Kacmarcik

Christmas Eve-Eve 2017, while splurging on a pedicure I flipped thru my phone looking at rare bird reports. My eye was quickly drawn to the sighting of a cooperative Snowy Owl hanging out on a dock in Westpoint, VA. Seeing that there was plenty of daylight left and knowing it was an easy drive down I-64 I called a birding friend always up for a spontaneous adventure. Within an hour Kathy Kreutzer and I were cruising our way eastward in hopes of a life bird for her Christmas list.

The directions were spot on. I had just pulled in to the owl neighborhood along the York River when Kathy said “man, I don’t see it”. I said, easy there stallion...the car isn’t even in “park” yet. And then...there it was. A wall of spotting scopes and camera lenses longer than my arm. We knew we were in the right place.

I don’t think Kathy had both feet out of the car when she said “there it is...I see it“. The Snowy Owl was perched on a piling just off the deck of a home in Westpoint. It was magnificent. Two hours worth of magnificent! Kathy and I watched this owl that never moved from the piling for 2 solid hours. It preened, it flexed, it turned its head all around. The “camera lenses” had left. We were losing light as a cold rain began to fall. The Snowy was not a life bird for me but moreover another great life experience. So exciting to be with someone seeing a Snowy Owl for the first time. We had a celebratory toast and dinner to top off a great day.

RAS MEMBER’S MEETINGS

WHEN: RAS membership meetings are on the 3rd Thursday of the month at 7:00 PM (except June, July, August and December). Come early for coffee, cookies and conversation beforehand starting at 6:30 PM.

WHERE: Held at St. Luke Lutheran Church • 7757 Chippenham Pkwy., Richmond, VA at the corner of Custis Road and Chippenham Parkway unless noted.

VISIT: www.RichmondAudubon.org for actual dates, times and for additional information.
(President's Message cont. from page 1) “Seven Pleasures of Birding” that one of the New Yorkers put together to explain to his friends why he enjoyed spending time birding. I was able to find his list online, and here it is:

1. The beauty of the birds
2. The beauty of being in a natural setting
3. The joys of hunting, without the bloodshed
4. The joy of collecting (in that the practice of keeping lists -- life lists, day lists, etc.-- appeals to the same impulse as, say, stamp collecting)
5. The joy of puzzle-solving (in making those tough identifications)
6. The pleasure of scientific discovery (new observations about behavior, etc.) and saving the best for last,
7. The Unicorn Effect--After you’ve been birding for even a little while, there are birds you’ve heard of or seen in books that capture your imagination, but you’ve never seen for yourself...and then one day, there it is in front of you, as if some mythical creature has stepped out of a storybook and come to life. There’s no thrill quite like it.


I hope that film, and that list, inspired some in the audience to want to experience the pleasures of birding for themselves. If someone asked you why you enjoy birding, what would make your list of the pleasures of birding?

Eileen R Geller - RAS President

FROM THE EDITORS

Spring is around the corner and that means it is time to get the hummingbird feeders out of storage and set them out filled with sugar water (1:4 ratio). “Hummers” typically arrive in the Richmond area at the end or March or early April. Sadly Lanny Chambers of St. Louis, MO who has been providing an annual online, almost real time migration map of the Ruby-throated Hummingbird, will no longer be doing it. Lanny’s streak of 22 consecutive years has ended courtesy of Google. However all is not lost because, historical maps from 1996 to 2018 are still on line and the site also has a wealth of information on all hummingbirds. I urge you to visit this site: http://www.hummingbirds.net/index.html

Many thanks to those who shared their birds and blooms pictures with the Thrasher readers. Surprisingly, the American Goldfinch tied with the Ruby-throated Hummingbird as the most popular species. You can check out the results on pages 4 and 5.

If you have ideas to improve the content of this publication, please share it with us at: thrasher@richmondaudubon.org.

Bob Schamerhorn & Naseem Reza - Co-Editors
FROM THE KITCHEN WINDOW – BY JOHN COE

Short of having spent the previous eve at the cheap beer tasting tent, I don’t think a person could sleep through a late March dawn. Maybe with the windows shut and your head under the comforter.

At the first hint of light the exuberant bubbling of the Caroline Wren announces morning. I think the wren is the Cardinal’s alarm clock, who also wakes up really happy. You know, maybe we humans could design a wren song alarm clock and then we too would always wake up HAPPY. Then again, the squirrels here seem real grippy about the ninth round of the wren’s chorus!!

Soon after the cardinals, the robins start singing, which in turn starts the titmice and chickadees. And by the time the sun comes up the woodpeckers are banging on everything and the whole scene is alive with sound.

As March becomes April, new sounds will join the chorus: the high notes of the warblers – so hard to see up in the treetops, and the vireos; and the wonderous song of the Wood Thrush near the ground, and in between the orioles and tanagers and flycatchers and cuckoos…..it’s enough to keep you going the whole day!!

The 3rd and final super moon of the year, March’s full Worm Moon occurs on the 20th. Daylight savings time begins on the 10th and the March 20th Equinox heralds in SPRING!!

April’s full moon, the Pink Moon, is on the 19th. Of course don’t be fooled on April 1st. Celebrate Earth Day on the 22nd and view the Lyrids meteor shower that night.
BIRDS AND BLOOMS

American Goldfinch by Larry Tipton

White-throated Sparrow by Al Warfield

Ruby-throated Hummingbird by Pam Scrima

American Goldfinch by Hudson Hoen

Red-bellied Woodpecker by Naseem Reza

Ruby-throated Hummingbird by Doug Rogers
ATTENTION JERRY UHLMAN FANS
For 20 years, Jerry Uhlman has been writing about birding and travel, including the Flyways & Byways column in the Richmond Times-Dispatch and his book, A Birder’s Guide to Metropolitan Richmond. Flyways@verizon.net. Jerry has moved and took his popular column to Boomer Magazine. You can read his latest column at:

American Goldfinch by Jerry Uhlman

Red-wiskered Bulbul by Lori Schamerhorn

Japanese White-eye (Mejiro) by Lori Schamerhorn

Ruby-throated Hummingbird by Julie Kacmarcik

Indigo Bunting by Bob Schamerhorn
RAS FIELD TRIPS

Check the RAS Listserv or the RAS website for information and any late breaking news about field trips or join our MEET-UP GROUP: www.meetup.com/RAS-Meetup/

MARCH

March 2, Saturday, 7:30 AM - Curles Neck. One of our favorite birding locations, Curles Neck Farm in Henrico County is excellent in any season. March will be our last chance to find large numbers of waterfowl before they start heading north. There is a high demand for this trip so you must register beforehand and space is limited. Please email Ellison Orcutt at Vicepresident1@richmondaudubon.org or call (804) 339-6976 to register and to get additional info. The trip will meet at the Curles Neck Farm entrance off of Route 5 at 7:30 a.m. We will condense vehicles for a mostly car based birding tour of the farm. The entrance, Curles Neck Rd, is three miles east from the New Market Rd (VA-5) exit off of I-295. Look for a large wood and stone gate.

March 3, 7:15 AM - Sunday - Bryan Park. Meet John Fones at Shelter #1 at about a half-hour after sunrise. Warm up at Stir Crazy Cafe afterwards. Contact John at (804) 363-0199 or at johnefones@icloud.com for more information.

March 16, Saturday, 7:30 AM - Adopt-a-Highway clean-up at Dutch Gap. Meet at 7:30 at the boat landing at the end of Coxendale Rd. Contact Lewis Barnett at blbarnett3@gmail.com or 804-920-4723 for more information.

March 23, Saturday, 9:00 AM - Maymont (joint trip with the Margaret Watson Bird Club). Maymont consists of an historic mansion and grounds bequeathed to the city of Richmond by its owners, James Henry and Sallie May Dooley. It is situated between Byrd Park and the James River, and features extensive gardens and a Nature Center. Meet Lewis Barnett in the public Byrd Park parking lot south of the corner of Amelia St. and Shields Lake Drive at 9:00 AM to check the Byrd Park lakes for wintering waterfowl. We will proceed onto the Maymont grounds when they open at 10:00 am. Contact Lewis at blbarnett3@gmail.com or 804-920-4723 for more information.

March 31, Sunday, 2:00 PM - Harrison Lake Fish Hatchery. Join Tyler Turpin for an hour of birding here. Contact Tyler at (804) 317-9478 or at tylerturpin@earthlink.net for more information.

APRIL

April 7, Sunday, 7:15 AM - Bryan Park. Meet John Fones at Shelter #1 at about a half-hour after sunrise. Socialize with the group at Stir Crazy Cafe afterwards. Contact John at (804) 363-0199 or at johnefones@icloud.com for more information.

April 13, Saturday, 8:15 AM - Dutch Gap. Meet Lewis Barnett in the Henricus Historical Park parking lot. Contact Lewis at blbarnett3@gmail.com or at (804) 920-4723 for more information.

April 14, Sunday, 8:00 AM - The Wetlands. Meet Paul Bedell at the entrance on Landria Dr. We will look for early migrants and breeding birds such as Yellow-throated Warbler and gnatchatchers. If the weather cooperates, we will look for early emerging dragonflies too. Contact Paul at pbedell@verizon.net for more information.

April 20, Saturday - Dragon Run PADDLE TRIP. (Paddle trip; hosted by Friends of Dragon Run). April 20, 9:00 AM - Saturday - Dragon Run. Join us for a bird- and wildlife-focused paddle trip on this scenic Middle Peninsula river with the Friends of Dragon Run (FODR) to observe myriad wetland and riparian specialties. Last year a whopping 60 Prothonotary Warblers were counted on a single outing! The trip is limited to 12 participants. Email Wes Teets at fieldtrips@richmondaudubon.org by April 13 to register. RAS will cover the cost of the paddle trip proper for its members and FODR will provide kayaks, paddles, and life vests. Meet at 9 AM at the lower end of the parking lot of the Food Lion on Route 17 in Saluda. We’ll be on the water for about 3 hours, wrapping up by around 2 PM. For more information, visit https://www.dragonrun.org/paddle-trip-info or email Janice Moore at president@dragonrun.org.

April 27, Saturday, 7:30 AM - Ashland Trolley line. Join Bob and Linda Cole for this annual spring walk to see what is migrating through Ashland. Meet at 7:30 am in the Luck Chevrolet parking lot. The walk is usually about 3-4 hours but you can leave at any time. Contact Bob or Linda at (804) 798-6618 with questions. Luck Chevrolet (516 S Washington Hwy, Ashland, VA) is at the intersection of Rt. 1 and Ashcake Rd (across from Sheetz). Please park in the paved parking lot to the left and do not park among the new/used cars in the paved lot. You will be led to the walk site. Be ready for wet/moist conditions. Rain date is Sunday, April 28. Contact Bob or Linda at (804) 798-6618 with questions.

MAY!

May 4, Saturday, 7:00 AM - 42nd Street. Meet John Fones at Shelter #1. Warm up at Stir Crazy Cafe afterwards. Contact John at (804) 363-0199 or at johnefones@icloud.com for more information.
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ABOUT THE RICHMOND AUDUBON SOCIETY

Richmond Audubon Society (RAS) is a chapter of The National Audubon Society (NAS). Becoming a member of either Society enrolls your membership in both (NAS and RAS by zip code). Renewals are processed through The National Audubon Society.

AFFILIATES: Chapter of the Virginia Society of Ornithology (VSO) and the Virginia Conservation Network (VCN).

MAILING ADDRESS: Richmond Audubon Society P.O. Box 26648 • Richmond, VA 23261

PHONE (Message Line): 804-601-4917

WEBSITE: www.RichmondAudubon.org

FACEBOOK: www.facebook.com/RichmondAudubon/

MEET-UP GROUP: www.meetup.com/RAS-Meetup/

TWITTER: www.twitter.com/@RichmondAudubon

LISTSERV: www.freelists.org/list/va-richmond-general

NONPROFIT: RAS is a registered nonprofit 501 (C) (3) charitable organization. Donations are tax deductible.

NEWSLETTER: “The Thrasher” is issued bimonthly (January, March, May, July, September, November.) Submissions due by the 10th of the month prior. The newsletter is available for download (PDF) from the RAS website or by special request for a hard copy.

RAS BOARD MEETINGS: Second Thursdays of January, March, May, July (annual strategic planning session), September, and November. Board Meeting start times and locations vary, members are welcome to attend, contact the President or Secretary in advance.

AUDUBON SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Yes, enroll me (us) as member(s) of both National Audubon and Richmond Audubon Societies at the address below, at the introductory rate of $20.00.

A subscription to the NAS “Audubon” magazine is included.

Name_________________________________
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Make check payable to:
National Audubon Society
for Individual/Family Membership
write “X53” as the memo.

Send check and application to:
Richmond Audubon Society
P.O. Box 26648, Richmond, VA 23261
X53
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